

store for years, and all studies and market analysis done in the city for the past 10 years have shown that a grocery store would be a great asset to the area. Becky and Tom Shockley, two Burlington citizens, have led the charge to get this project completed, and will be investing almost \$4 million into this project made possible through the Main Street Challenge Grant. This project serves the people of Burlington in more ways than just providing them a grocery store; it will create jobs, increase the tax base, and help to improve the community at large.

The beauty of the Main Street Iowa program is that the ideas and initiatives come from our towns and rural communities. I have been pleased to secure \$1.5 million in funding since 2002 for Main Street Iowa Challenge Grants. The Main Street programs of the Iowa Department of Economic Development help provide technical assistance, but, as we have seen in Burlington, success itself comes from local leadership, local teamwork, and home-grown ideas and solutions.

This project is a shining example of new construction and a catalyst for future projects. With a continued increase in residents living in downtown Burlington, a grocery store is a much needed addition. When people see one of the anchor businesses on Main Street being renovated or expanded, this can change the whole psychology of a town or community. It offers hope. It serves as a catalyst for a far-reaching ripple effect of positive changes.

So I congratulate Becky and Tom Shockley and the citizens of Burlington for putting together a winning proposal to secure a Main Street Challenge Grant. Their efforts to reinvigorate their historic downtown are setting a terrific example for other small towns across America, and for that, I salute them.●

IN APPRECIATION OF CONNECTICUT'S METROPOLITAN DISTRICT COMMISSION

● Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, today is Metropolitan District Commission Day in Connecticut and it is with great pleasure that I send my congratulations to the commission as it celebrates another year of impressive service to the people of Connecticut and our State's riverfronts.

Seven years ago, Connecticut's Metropolitan District Commission took on a groundbreaking mission. Expanding its role of providing water and sewer services to the Hartford region, the commission made a historic step to partner with the organization Riverfront Recapture to maintain Connecticut Riverfront parks and provide funding for park rangers in each of the parks. Metropolitan District Commission believed then as it believes today that creating and maintaining an attractive waterfront environment is valuable to everyone in a community.

Of course, the Metropolitan District Commission is no newcomer to civic

engagement. For decades the commission has participated in enhancing the Connecticut River's water quality—making it possible to use the once-polluted river for a rich variety of recreational activities, including fishing tournaments, triathlons, rowing regattas, and dragon boat races.

Metropolitan District Commission's partnership with Riverfront Recapture is only natural. The team has worked together skillfully to create a welcoming presence in the parks and attracting visitors as well as residents. Last year, more than 786,000 people visited the riverfront parks and as much as \$4 billion worth of development projects are underway or planned within walking distance of the parks. The Metropolitan District Commission's funding efforts and maintenance capabilities are critical to making the mission succeed. Unsurprisingly, this exceptional partnership is attracting national attention as a model for urban parks management.

By commemorating the contributions of the Metropolitan District Commission today, we honor the spirit of entrepreneurship that has profited the people of Connecticut and their guests so significantly.

I am very happy to join colleagues in honoring the Metropolitan District Commission on this day, October 25, 2005.●

TRIBUTE TO COLONEL BRAD APPLGATE

● Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, I rise today on behalf of Oregonians, the people of the Pacific Northwest, and all Americans to pay tribute to COL Brad Applegate, the Wing Commander of the 142nd Fighter Wing. In doing so, I also pay tribute to all those who wear our Nation's uniform, as Colonel Applegate's professionalism and capability is characteristic of all those who serve to protect our Nation.

Brad Applegate began his association with the Air Force while attending Indiana University when he received an Air Force Reserve Officer Training Course aviation scholarship. Upon graduating, he received his commission in the U.S. Air Force, and shortly thereafter, began his training as an F-15 pilot. From that time until now, Brad has served in many locations and has been awarded several decorations. As an F-15 pilot, he is quick to tell you that homeland security has long been his specialty.

My association with Colonel Applegate is relatively late in his career. With the recent round of Base Realignment and Closure, BRAC, proposals from the Defense Department, the people of the Pacific Northwest woke up to the news that the reassuring roar of the F-15 Eagles from the 142nd Fighter Wing might not be flying over their heads in the years to come. I learned quickly that the Portland Air National Guard base was among the first bases to be scrutinized by the BRAC Commissioners and analysts.

With little more than a weekend to prepare, Colonel Applegate organized his team, sifted through the scant and murky details of the proposal, and prepared such an extensive briefing to the Commissioners and analysts that the efforts of the 142nd presentation became a model for bases across the country. The media will give, and the politicians will take, credit for saving the bases, but I am here today to set the record straight in regards to the preservation of the 142nd Fighter Wing in Portland. The intelligence, skill, and knowledge of COL Brad Applegate and his team is why we will continue to have air defenses in the Pacific Northwest. Without his leadership skills, my part of the country would be an open target for our enemies.

Colonel Applegate will soon be retiring from military service after more than 20 years of dedicated service to his Nation. The leadership torch of the 142nd Fighter Wing will soon be passed to another very capable fighter pilot and leader, and the important work of our Air National Guard will continue.

Mr. President, I would like to offer my words of appreciation and thanks to COL Applegate and the countless others who wear our Nation's uniform. Although our Nation has dangerous enemies who wish to do us harm, I sleep better at night knowing that the reassuring roar of the F-15 Eagles will continue to fly overhead in the Pacific Northwest.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Williams, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations and a withdrawal which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

NOTIFICATION OF THE PRESIDENT'S INTENT TO ENTER INTO A FREE TRADE AGREEMENT WITH THE SULTANATE OF OMAN—PM 26

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was referred to the Committee on Finance.

To the Congress of the United States:

Consistent with section 2105(a)(1)(A) of the Trade Act of 2002 (Public Law 107-210) (the "Trade Act"), I am pleased to notify the Congress of my intention to enter into a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the Sultanate of Oman.